WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A law enforcement vehicle comprising:

    a camera mounted on the law enforcement vehicle, the camera configured to identify a license plate on a vehicle, and to provide an output signal indicative of the identified license plate;

    a processor configured to receive a signal from the camera indicative of the identified license plate, and to compare the received signal with a list of stolen vehicle license plates;

    a storage device coupled to the processor, the storage device configured to provide to the processor the list of stolen vehicle license plates; and

    an output device configured to provide an output detectable by a law enforcement officer indicating that a detected license plate matches a license plate in the list of stolen vehicle license plates.

2. The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 wherein the camera is configured to identify the license plate on the vehicle while the law enforcement vehicle is in motion.

3.   The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 wherein the storage device is further configured to store an image of the vehicle and the license plate of any license plate that matches a license plate in the

5   list of stolen vehicle license plates.

4.   The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 wherein the output device provides detailed information related to the identified license plate.

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5.   The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 wherein the output device provides an audible signal to the law enforcement officer.

15   6.   The law enforcement vehicle of claim 4 wherein the output device further provides an audible signal to the law enforcement officer.

7.   The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 further

20   comprising:

a radio transmitter configured to transmit to a
central location a signal indicating that
the law enforcement vehicle has detected a
license plate in the list of stolen vehicle

25   license plates.

8.   The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 wherein the storage device is further configured to receive an updated list of stolen vehicle license plates.

9.   The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1:

wherein the camera is configured to provide a
        description of the vehicle identified to
5   the processor;

wherein the storage device is further configured
        to provide to the processor information on
        the vehicle associated with the identified
        license plate;

10   wherein the processor is further configured to
        compare the information on the vehicle with
        the identified license plate with the image
        provided by the camera; and

wherein the output device is further configured
15   to   provide   the   output   signal   .if   the
        information   provided   does   not   match   the
        image.

10.   The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 further
20   comprising:

a   plurality   of   cameras   mounted   to   the   law
        enforcement   vehicle,   each   of   the   cameras
        configured to identify a license plate on a
        vehicle,   each   of   the   plurality   of   cameras
25   providing   a   signal   to   the   processor
        indicative of an identified license plate;

wherein the processor is configured to process
        the signal from each of the plurality of

cameras, and to compare each signal with the list of stolen vehicle license plates.

11. A method of identifying from a law enforcement vehicle, a vehicle, comprising the steps of:

capturing an image of the vehicle with at least one camera;

identifying from the image a license plate area;

determining a character set representative of a license plate number;

comparing the determined character set with a database of license plate numbers; and

providing an output indicating that a match is found between the character set and the database.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising:

providing an output indicating that a match is not found in the database.

13. The method of claim 11 further comprising:

storing a copy of the image in a database of captured images.

14. The method of claim 11 further comprising:

updating the database of license plate numbers from a central database.

15. The method of claim of claim 11 wherein the database of license plates contains license plates associated with stolen vehicles, and wherein the providing step provides output indicating that the

5   identified license plate is to a stolen vehicle.

16. The method of claim 11 wherein capturing the image captures the image while the law enforcement vehicle is in motion.

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17.   The method of claim 11 further comprising:
         transmitting from the law enforcement vehicle to
             a central station information related to an
             identified vehicle that matches a license

15   plate in the database of license plates.